Barney Frauenthal, "Who Knows It All," Answered a Quarter Million Questions in Seven Days.

Information Bureau Manager's Own Story of the Busiest Occasion in the History of St. Louis Union Station.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

Dedication Week brought new duties to every citizen of St. Louis, but the man of all men the multitude kept the busiest was Barney Frauenthal.

The strangers met Barney.

He was all things to everybody.

From his window at the Bureau of Information, Union Station, he came into swift intimacy with thousands of persons.

Like birds of passage, they hovered in groups.

And the questions they asked!

"Shadows we are and shadows we pursue, but the human interrogation point seeks the shadow of a phantom," declared Barney, paraphrasing Shakespeare.

There was the traveler, en route to another point, who had stopped over a few hours and wanted hurried instructions as to how to visit the World's Fair grounds, see the town and reserve a berth for his night journey; the weary mother, anxious to be directed to the nearest family hotel; the know-all, who had been in town once before and wondered why he couldn't get first-class accommodations at the usual price; the rural stranger, timid, but determined; the crank, the sporting man, the faker and the general public, that queried about train connections. This throng was given courteous attention.

The World's Fair management maintained a department on the second floor of the station for the guidance of those who wanted to rent rooms. One man was detailed to tell questioners how to find this bureau.

Here is the comedy of errors, just as it was played for twenty minutes on Wednesday evening:

Eastern traveling man, in from New York: "Beg pardon, but where is the branch post office; I want a stamp?"

Barney: "To your right, at the far end of the station; you'll see the sign."

Widow, grip in hand: "I want to take the fast train to Texas; what time does it leave?"

Barney: "Over what route is your ticket, madam?"

Widow: "The M., K. & T."

Barney: "You want the Katy Flyer, 8:32, track 18."

Nervous old gentleman, whose train departs in a few minutes: "What's the charges on this message?"

Barney: "Next window to your left."

Old gentleman: "But I'm in a hurry. You take it."

Barney: "Next window, please. What is it, boy?"

M. D. T.: "Hey, Barney, gimme yer pencil a second."

Barney accommodates him and a half dozen persons crowd up, talking at the same time. A telephone bell rings and to an observer the confusion is bewildering. Barney takes down the receiver.

Girl at window: "Is the Big Four from Paris, Ill., late?"

Barney: "Oh, no; train's been in half an hour. Track 12."

Puts receiver to his ear: "Hello, yes, Bureau of Information. Dog? What dog? You didn't have any dog here, sir. Bull terrier? Oh, you've made a mistake. Ring off. Parcel room, in dog bag? Oh, I daresay the canine's all right, but you'll have to look it up yourself. Good-by."

"Hewlett, a chap at the —— cafe wanted to know if his bullterrier in the parcel room was O. K. Said the brute was in dog bag. He wanted a flap raised so it would get more air."

Countryman, talking so loud that no one else can be heard: "Say, Mr. Depot Agent, where does Hiram Bejack live?"

Barney: "Look him up in the directory. You'll find one to your right."

Countryman discovers directory and dashes toward it, to the discomfort of the crowd around him.

Countryman: "Gosh, that's bigger'n my doctor book. Take me all night to find Hiram's name in that. Bejack, Hiram Bejack, Hiram Bejack," mumbles the man as he turns the leaves.

World's Fair visitor, wearing a flaring red badge marked "Wentzville, World's Fair Delegation": "Can you tell me where I can get rooms for a party of eight? I'm from Wentzville, sir. I'm a cattle buyer and I pay as I go."

Barney: "World's Fair Bureau, second floor, can fix you up."

Old Lady: "Have you seen Tommy, sir?"

Barney: "Madame, give the matron a description of your child. She'll have him looked up."

Brisk young man, who wants to show his knowledge of railroad schedules and trains: "Is the Vandalia Limited, No. 2, on time?"

Barney: "It was a few minutes ago. Watch the train board outside."

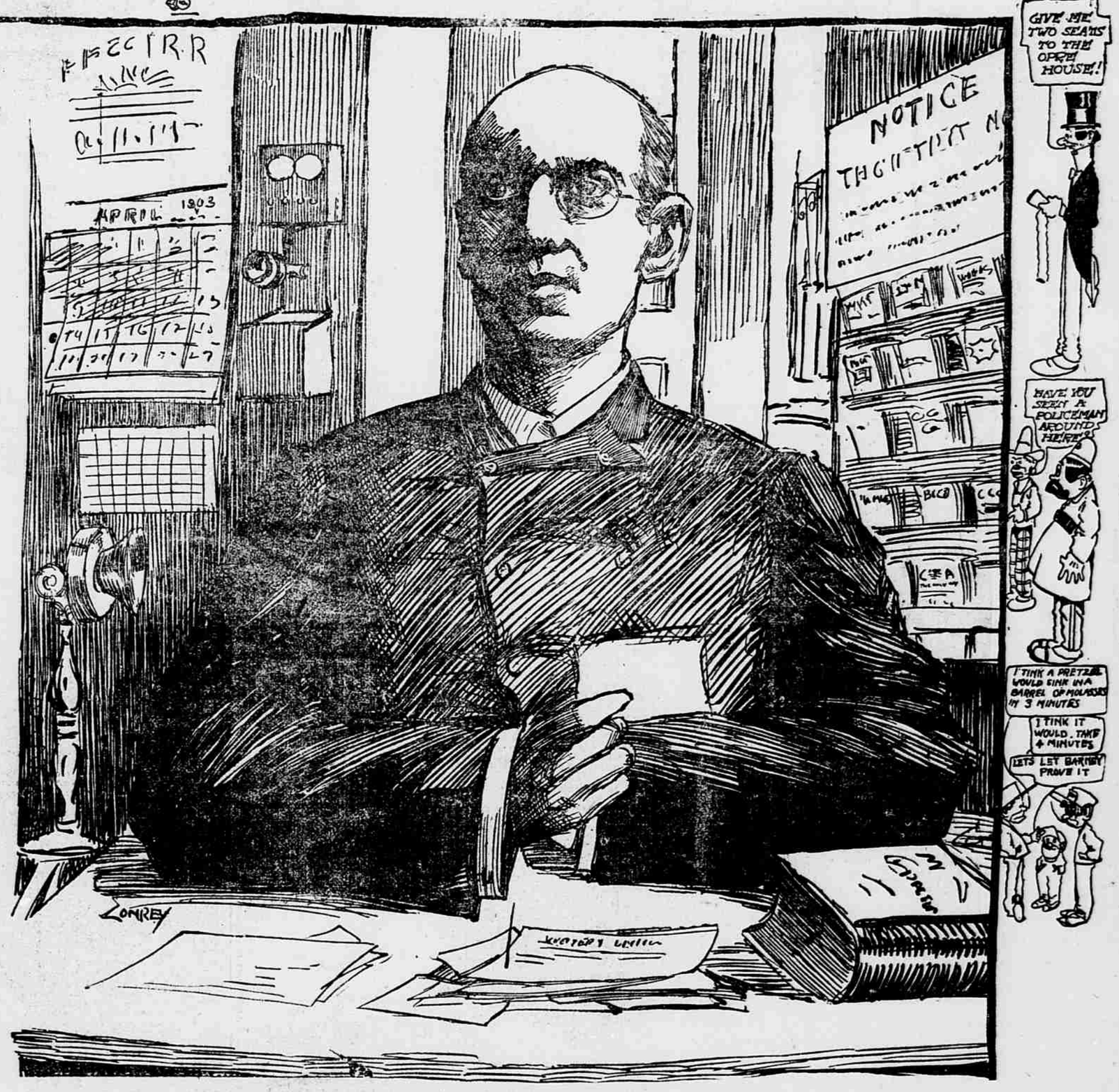
Elderly man, approaching window leisurely: "Can I get theater tickets here?"

Barney: "No, sir; this is the Bureau of Information."

Country politician, excited and in a hurry: "Whew! this crowd is awful. I've been twenty minutes walking here from the train. How can I get to the hall where President Roosevelt speaks to-night?"

Barney: "Take the northbound Eighteenth street car and transfer east at Olive. The President speaks in Music Hall, Olive and Fourteenth streets."

Absent-minded youth, who has been unable to locate the lunchroom and mistakes the bureau window for the place: "Bean sandwich and ham for five."



Barney Frauenthal, manager of the Bureau of Information
Sketched by a Republic Artist at Union Station.

How the Bureau Aided Visitors Dedication Week.

By Barney Frauenthal.

If ever proof was wanting that an information bureau should be a permanent department of a metropolitan railway station, the present period of our Future Great's progress must offer ample evidence of the confirmation of that fact.

The term Future Great, originally applied to the fast-growing city of St. Louis, in recognition years ago of its remarkable profgress in commerce and standing with other municipalities, has been outlived by the city itself, and now it is to be recorded that the original information bureau is no more a future great than the city, for each has become a very prominent IS.

Great as have been the strides of St. Louis, in its onward and upward march, the advance and improvement of this latter-day essential to the traveler's comfort, convenience and facility have far outstripped it.

Proof that the information bureau is one of the necessities of a city's railway station is observable in the inauguration throughout the East of the system first conceived here in St. Louis by the Terminal Railroad Association.

This proof is, of course, most discernable to the Eastern man; but to our Western travelers, the benefits derived from the information bureau began to spread with its initial opening.

It has not taken the Union Station bureau nine years to become known, but it has taken almost all of that time for the rest of the country to get "onto" the fact that every city should have a bureau in its station.

FRAUENTHAL'S NINE YEARS OF SERVICE.

I was put in charge of the first bureau this country ever saw in 1894, simultaneously with the opening of the St. Louis Union Station.

Having been in charge since then, the pride St. Louis will feel in having the world's population as her guests next year is not a bit more pleasing than are my own feelings when I record the forward movement of this institution.

I am still answering the same old queries put to me nine years ago, but dear, dear, what a mass of new matter crops up with each day's business!

Last week's budget of questions will stand as a record until the Fair really opens, barring the days immediately succeeding the frightful cyclone of 1896.

That occasion is worth referring to because of the chance the catastrophe gave our bureau to exhibit its usefulness.

As is known and sadly remembered, the cyclone blew down uncountable miles of telegraphic lines.

Here in the station, where all transportation intelligence is received by wire, we were in a demoralized state.

The departure and arrival of trains without the usual notice left us in an embarrassing condition.

Still, we pulled through that difficulty, for, while we had no wireless communication with the outside public, we did succeed in handling our end of the trouble to the entire satisfaction of everybody.

After that unprecedented rush of work we felt, at the beginning of last week, when all conditions were in our favor, that we could pull through right side up.

And we did.

It would be hard for me to estimate the number of persons who had communication with us, but, to state it generally and plainly, it was the biggest rush the big station ever knew.

We look for a continuation of this activity from now until Fair time, but our department will not be caught napping unless another breeze blows too strong for the wires.

NEWS ABOUT TRAINS RECEIVED BY WIRE.

Persons generally fail to grasp the principle that we ourselves must know a thing before we can impart the information to inquirers.

It is easy to tell where the parks are and the hotels and so on, but to the anxious one expecting a train, or the equally anxious one desirous of leaving town to make foreign connections, we must base our information on the information given us through the proper channels.

To ascertain train connections is one of the vital requisites of our position.

We must be able to explain to persons anticipating a trip through junction points, where the stations are located apart, the distance between these depots and the estimated time in making the transfer.

Besides this, the accoutrement of the train taken must be known—whether it carries chair, buffet, sleeping, dining or through cars, and whether meals are served on the train or a la carte, or whether disembarkation is necessary in order to dine.

Locally we are prepared to satisfy all questions bearing on situations unfamiliar to the stranger.

Last week we were asked questions on local history far in excess of those put to us on extraneous subjects.

St. Louis was full of visitors from other places, some of whom had been here before, but equally as ignorant of existent conditions as their less-informed companions.

Daily were we called on to satisfy queries of character that ranged from serious to frivolous topics.

The chap who wanted to know about the depth of the river would be followed by the man who desired to learn whether our shoe industry yet exceeded the Massachusetts mark of output.

Supplying data on the mode of procuring marriage licenses may be on the instant succeeded by an admonition to another inquirer that a child of small stature and seemingly 12 years old and over cannot travel on half rates.

The location of public and office buildings was a matter that was heavily worked, as were questions relative to the site of the World's Fair grounds.

STRANGER WHO QUERIES ABOUT BASEBALL MATTERS.

There is really nothing ridiculous in a man asking us to put him right on the baseball standing, nor must we criticise the economical aims of the man who asks us if two can occupy the same berth in a sleeper on one fare.

Still another person of rusty memory begs to know the number of votes cast for the successful candidate for Railroad and Warehouse Commissioner last November.

The divergence of queries is here exemplified by the next fellow, presumably a bird fancier, who wants to know where he may purchase a crow.

Religiously inclined folks come to us for directions as to prayer meetings, and not a few sportily grooved strangers sought schedules on the local prize fights, billiard matches and the races.

And, of course, politics is always a subject in which we find the big, big public out of town is endeavoring to keep a line on.

Affairs in St. Louis politically have become universally known, as is evidenced by the query of that visitor who asked our bureau if Circuit Attorney Folk thought William Jennings Bryan would support "Our Joe" for President.

And the traveler who came miles and miles to see St. Louis was not done riding when he got here, to judge by the multiplicity of questions asked us about the local street-car lines, how to get the longest ride for a nickel, and how many transfers a passenger is entitled to, and so on.

The beery reputation of St. Louis is well established too, but we are at a loss sometimes to please people; for we can't tell them that Pilzenheimer's brew is better than Heimerpilzen's even if we prefer the former brand of hops ourselves.

INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION.

The move of the Business Men's League and the World's Fair management in instituting the Free-Infromation Service of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition on the second floor of the Union Station Grand Hall was a very thoughtful one and entirely creditable to the interests involved.

It relieved our bureau to a great extent of the work housing and and directing strangers to the temporary quarters during Dedication Week.

The manner in which the temporary bureau was conducted by the clerks in charge reflected great credit on the evolvers of the idea.

We were pleased to render them the benfit of our experience and we worked thoroughly in harmony.

The Union Station Information Bureau is the servant of the people in a broader sense than one can apply to any other institution.

It knows no race or social stratum.

Aristocracy and democracy, poverty and plenty, literate and illiterate, the highest public official and the humblest alien, touch elbows with one another at the inquiry window and are given the same consideration that arises from the sense of responsibility which carries with it the knowledge that they all pay the same railroad fare.

ATOMIC EMANATIONS FROM RADIUM.

Mysterious Element Said to Have the Power to Produce Heat Without Outside Help—Sir William Crooke's Discovery.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

A lump of pitch-blende is not a very attractive thing.

One may pass it casually in the museum without seeing any reason to take particular interest in the greenish or brownish black masses that cluster together like grapes.

But some of the most fascinating speculations that have lately been made in physical laboratories invest pitch-blende with tremendous interest, as the source of a mysterious form of energy that transcends all our ideas on the subject, and may possibly point the way to a new source of power that will revolutionize our industries.

The remarkable discovery of Sir William Crookes whereby the "ions," or atomic emanations from radium, have been rendered visible will renew and deepen interest in this mysterious source of energy.

It is now established, according to Professor Lippmann of the Sorbonne—who carries much weight in France—that radium, one of the most recently discovered elements, has the power of continually generating heat without the aid of any external source of energy.

Every one, whether scientifically minded or not, will see the tremendous practical importance which such a discovery, if it should prove to be valid, must have for the world.

Every one knows the difficulty which the coal question presents to the royal commission that is valorously grappling with its intricacies.

What a saving of dirt, expense and labor would be achieved if, instead of keeping a fire going in cold weather—with all the attendant necessities of smutty-faced housemaids, outraged footman, smoke and grime, and a gigantic coal bill—all one had to do was to buy a sufficiently large piece of radium and put it in the fireplace once for all!

At present that is not a practical possibility.

Even if the heat given out by the radium were sufficient for a room, only the millionaire could hope to warm himself by its rays.

Uranium, the metal of which pitch-blende is the chief ore, costs something like £2,000 a ton, and it is only possible to extract a small quantity of radium from a large quantity of uranium—with which it is usually intermingled—by a laborious and costly process.

In the meantime we must be content to stick to coal. Besides, the phenomenon of which Professor Lippmann speaks occurs at present only on a very tiny scale, and to ask for serious aid from it in the business of life would be an unreasonable as to expect Sir William Crookes's ingenious radiometer, which may be seen in chemist's windows, spinning its little fans in the sunlight, to grind out corn.

The chief interest of these new "radioactive" elements lies at present in the rather paradoxical light that they throw on the problems of physical science.

It is quite possible that like their immediate predecessors, the Roentgen rays and the Hertz waves, these Becquerel rays may also be pressed into the service of mankind. And it is worth while to inquire into their nature and probable significance.

Many years ago it was noticed that a coin or a sheet of print, if shut up in a dark box at close quarters, though not in actual contact with a sheet of blank paper, would, after many days, be found to have impressed on it a faint image of itself.

Some persons attributed these markings superhuman agencies, and called them "spirit photographs." Seguin, who hit on the true explanation more by good luck than good guidance, was laughed at when he suggested the comparatively prosaic theory that the coin or the printing ink must be continually giving off a stream of tiny particles which in time produced an impression on the paper that they were bombarding.

SPECIMENS OF DUNITE

Give Rise to a Discussion of Possible Diamond Deposits in Kentucky.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

The American Museum of Natural History has received from Kentucky interesting specimens of green rock, known as dunite, which, occurring in conjunction with carbon-bearing strata, carboniferous sandstones and shales, in portions of Elliott County, that State, has given rise to the suggestion that Kentucky may contain diamond deposits which will one day make it an American Kimberley.

The specimens include samples of the rock from deep down in the ground and from the surface where it has been "weathered."

This dunite is composed of chrysolite and pyroxene, with garnet and an iron mineral besides some specks of mica.

Through its "weathered" portion the entire mineral texture is changed to what is known as "serpentine," and the "weathered" rock discharges crystals and iron oxide, and garnet fragments which have been picked up from time to time in the river beds of the region.

The basis of the suggestion of diamonds lies in the correspondence of association between the dunite and carboniferous rock in Kentucky and a similar association in the Kimberley fields.

It is inferred that the dunite is an eruptive rock, and that in passing through the carboniferous deposits it may have caused the formation of carbon vapors, and that these vapors, when absorbed by the molten matter of the discharging rock, may have resulted in the formation of the diamonds.

The correspondence with the Kimberley situation is rather close.

In the diamond fields there "necks" of volcanic rock pierce through carbonaceous shales, and the diamond deposits are thought to have resulted from a process similar to the one described.

The Journal of the American Museum, in which the matter is discussed, states that the question is undecided, but that the correspondence of conditions is so close that the diamond-field theory is at least plausible for Kentucky.

Two diamonds said to have come from the fields, have been shown, but the Museum Journal does not give overmuch credence to their place of reference.

It says, however, that the thing which permits the greatest amount of confidence is an experiment in which a diffused globule of olivine—virtually the same rock as that of the Kentucky deposits—is stirred with a carbon pencil, and is found, upon cooling, to contain microscopic diamond grains.

The exhibit at the museum is in case 25, in the [illegible] end of the Mineralogical Hall.